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Advisor for Management

24 February 1951

Assistant Director For Research and Reports

Allocation, Distribution and Control of Intelligence Materials  
Within the Agency

REFERENCE : Management Staff Study, same subject

1. My preliminary reactions to your recommendations are as follows:

a. Needless to say anything which will reduce the amount of logging and time-consuming paper-work required for control of documents in the Agency is highly desirable, other things being equal.

b. The functions of a reading panel are not mechanical and clerical functions primarily but are substantive functions. It requires a very high degree of understanding of kinds of problems an analyst is working on, the kinds of data to which he has already had access and the kinds of information he is likely to need, and effectively to weed out from the total flow of material things he does not need to see. This understanding can only exist in the reading panel if its members are in the closest personal contact with the analysts. In my experience the mere matter of physical proximity is of enormous importance. If the reader is within a few doors of the analysts a continuous process of checking of doubtful items can and will take place. If the two are in different buildings this is impossible.

c. To some extent an understanding in the panel of the analyst's problems can be achieved by assigning analysts temporarily to reading panel work. This is difficult to arrange if the reading panel is in a different office organizationally from the analysts.

d. We are proposing in O/RR a reading panel scheme in which approximately half the personnel of the reading panel at one given time will be on temporary assignment to it from the substantive divisions of the office. We have some doubts as to whether a reading panel at the office level will work or whether in order to be effective it does have to be decentralized to Division level. We are preparing to try the office level panel to see whether it is advisable.

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9. I am aware that a reading panel at the office level requires some prior screening of documents to decide to which office they should be routed. I think we should have some evidence as to the amount of overlap in the interests of different offices in order to decide how important the problem of multiple routing is. If the number of items of interest to two or more offices is relatively small the initial distribution can be on a fairly mechanical basis.

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